CBSE EXAMINATION PAPER-2026

ENGLISH

(Solved)

Time allowed : 3 hours | Maximum Marks : 80

General Instructions :

Read the following instructions carefully and follow them :

i. This question paper contains **34 questions.** All questions are **compulsory.**

ii. This question paper is divided into **7 sections.**

iii. **Section A** – questions number **1 to 4** are case based questions

iv. **Section B** – questions number **5 to 6** are unseen passage

v. **Section C** – questions number **7 to 18** are grammar short

vi. **Section D** – questions number **19 to 26** are short answer

vii. **Section E** – questions number **27 to 28** are paragraph

viii. **Section F** – questions number **29 to 30** are letter

ix. **Section G** – questions number **31 to 34** are long answer

x. There is no overall choice given in the question paper. However, an internal choice has been provided in few questions.

xi. Use of calculator is NOT allowed.

Section A

Question 1. Ausable did not fit any description of a secret agent Fowler had ever read. Following him down the musty corridor of the gloomy French hotel where Ausable had a room, Fowler felt let down. It was a small room, on the sixth and top floor and scarcely a setting for a romantic adventure. Ausable was, for one thing, fat, very fat. And then there was his accent. Though he spoke French and German passably, he had never altogether lost the American accent he had brought to Paris from

Boston twenty years ago. “You are disappointed,” Ausable said wheezily over his shoulder. (The Midnight Visitor)

(1)

Which of the following describes how Fowler felt on seeing Ausable for the first time?

(A) excited and happy

(B) indifferent and disgusted

(C) surprised and disappointed

(D) envious and in awe

[1 Marks]

(2)

Fill in the blank with the correct word:

Ausable’s reaction on seeing how Fowler felt shows that he was _____. (observant/embarrassed)

[1 Marks]

(3) In what way does Ausable defy the typical spy image?

[1 Marks]

(4) How did the hotel’s atmosphere influence Fowler’s mood?

[2 Marks]

Question 2. “I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.” (Nelson Mandela : Long Walk to Freedom)

(1)

What is the main ideal Mandela is talking about?

(A) economic prosperity

(B) representative and free society

(C) absolute power

(D) finishing racism

[1 Marks]

(2) How does the statement reflect Mandela's commitment to justice? (Answer in about 40 words)

[2 Marks]

(3)

Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket :

Nelson's vision was not simply to reverse the oppression but to end it completely as he wishes to _____ (fight/appease) all forms of domination in which all persons live with equal opportunities.

[1 Marks]

(4)

The phrase "prepared to die" shows Mandela's :

(A) anxiety

(B) desperation

(C) passion

(D) uprightness

[1 Marks]

Question 3.

What, what is the boy now

who has lost his ball.

What, what is he to do.

I saw it go

Merrily bouncing, down the street and then Merrily over – there it is in the water!

No use to say 'O there are other balls'.

(The Ball Poem by John Berryman)

(1) What does the repetition of the word "merrily" suggest in the context of the ball's movement?

[1 Marks]

(2)

Fill in the blank with the correct word from the bracket :

The poet uses the ball as a symbol of the boy's _____. (childhood/adventure)

[1 Marks]

(3) How does this moment contrast the mood of the poem before and after the ball falls into the water? (Answer in about 40 words)

[2 Marks]

(4)

The line, ‘No use to say, oh there are other balls’ signifies:

(A) Words of consolation are inappropriate.

(B) The boy must be left alone and play with other toys.

(C) The boy should not be left alone.

(D) No ball will be as expensive as the one the boy has lost.

[1 Marks]

Question 4.

All night the roots work

To disengage themselves from the cracks

in the veranda floor. The leaves strain towards the glass

small twigs stiff with exertion

long-cramped boughs shuffling

under the roof

like newly discharged patients

half dazed, moving to the clinic doors.

(Trees)

(1) What do the roots work upon all night?

[1 Marks]

(2) Each part of the trees works to get itself free. Describe their struggle. (Answer in about 40 words)

[2 Marks]

(3)

Fill the blank with one word.

The long branches are compared to _____.

[1 Marks]

(4)

The phrase 'half-dazed' is used for the branches as they adjust from being indoors to being in the open. It highlights the branches' :

(A) disorientation and fragility

(B) experience and privilege

(C) hurt and injury

(D) barrenness and pain

[1 Marks]

Section B

Question 5.

Read the following text :

(1) Forests are often called the lungs of the Earth, and in India, they are an integral part of the country's ecological, economic, and cultural fabric. They regulate temperatures and help keep the air clean. Covering about 21.71% of India's geographical area, forests play a pivotal role in sustaining biodiversity, regulating climate, and supporting the livelihoods of millions of people. However, these verdant expanses face numerous challenges, raising important questions about conservation, sustainable development, and policy priorities.

(2) India's forests are incredibly diverse, ranging from the lush tropical rain forests to the alpine vegetation of the Himalayas. This diversity is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, many of which are endemic or endangered, such as the Bengal tiger, Indian elephant, and Nilgiri Tahr. Forests also provide critical ecosystem services like water conservation, soil fertility, and carbon sequestration, which are essential in combating climate change.

(3) Economically, forests contribute significantly through timber, medicinal plants and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) like honey and bamboo. They are also central to the lives of tribal communities who depend on them for sustenance and cultural practices. However, this dependence brings to light the complex relationship between human development and forest preservation.

(4) Is it possible to achieve economic growth without degrading forest resources ? The pressures on India's forests are immense. Rapid urbanization, industrial expansion, mining, and agricultural encroachment have led to significant deforestation. According to recent reports, India lost around 66,000 hectares of forest cover between 2019 and 2021. This loss not only threatens biodiversity but also exacerbates climate-related challenges such as rising temperatures and erratic rainfall.

(5) Policy measures like the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 and initiatives such as Compensatory Afforestation and Van Mahotsav (Forest Festival) reflect efforts to preserve and expand forest areas. However, critics argue that these measures often fail to address ground realities. For instance, afforestation projects may involve planting monoculture species that disrupt ecosystems rather than restore natural biodiversity. Similarly, conflicts arise when policies overlook the rights of indigenous communities, leading to displacement and social tensions. India's forests are a microcosm of the global struggle to balance development with conservation.

(6) Solutions lie in adopting sustainable practices, such as agroforestry, eco-tourism, and community-based conservation models. Empowering local communities to act as custodians of forests ensures both their livelihoods and the health of forest ecosystems. Moreover, raising awareness about the importance of forests can inspire collective action at all levels.

Answer the following questions, based on the passage above :

(1) In paragraph 1, what does the phrase 'Lungs of the Earth' refer to with reference to the passage?

[1 Marks]

(2)

Complete the following with the correct option from the two given: Forests play a significant role in sustaining biodiversity by _____

(a) balancing climate change and creating livelihoods for people.

(b) Providing wood for fuel and industries worldwide.

[1 Marks]

(3) Support the writer's idea that forests provide critical ecosystem services with textual evidence. (Para 2)

[2 Marks]

(4)

What do the recent statistics on deforestation reveal about the state of India's forests? (Para 4)

(A) Deforestation has decreased significantly.

(B) Forest loss has been stabilized.

(C) Forest cover is rapidly declining.

(D) There is no significant impact on forest cover.

[1 Marks]

(5)

Select the concept that best reflects the complex relationship between human development and preservation. (Para 3)

(a) Rapid urbanization has led to widespread deforestation depriving flora and fauna of its natural habitat.

(b) The introduction of initiatives like Van Mahotsav serve as compensatory afforestation.

[1 Marks]

(6) State whether the following statement is true or false: Deforestation is one of the reasons for erratic rainfall. (Para 4)

[1 Marks]

(7) List one challenge that critics see in compensatory afforestation measures. (Para 5)

[1 Marks]

(8) How do community-based conservation models benefit both forests and local communities? (Para 6)

[2 Marks]

Question 6.

Read the following passage carefully :

The Rise of Electric Vehicles in India :

(1) Electric Vehicles (EVs) are gaining significant traction globally. In India, the push for EVs is driven by concerns over air pollution, rising fuel costs and government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions. The Indian Government has set ambitious targets for EV adoption, aiming for 30% of private cars, 70% of commercial vehicles, and 80% of two wheelers and three-wheelers to be electric by 2030. (2) The benefits of EVs extend beyond environmental impact : Lower running cost due to cheaper electricity, reduces maintenance because of fewer moving parts, and lowers noise pollution in urban areas.

(3) Despite the promising outlook, the EV industry in India faces several challenges currently. While public charging stations are slowly increasing, their availability, especially in semi-urban and rural areas, remains a bottleneck. The initial high purchase cost of EVs and concerns about range or the fear of running out of charge are other causes of anxiety.

(4) To overcome these hurdles, the government is offering subsidies and tax benefits to make EVs more affordable. Private companies are investing in developing new EV models with improved battery technology for longer ranges and battery swapping technology is also being explored as a quick alternative to traditional charging.

(5) The Indian EV market is witnessing rapid growth, with sales figures steadily climbing. In 2023, India recorded sales of over 1.5 million EVs, a significant jump from previous years. Two-wheelers dominated the sales, followed by three-wheelers and then passenger cars. States like Maharashtra, Delhi, and Karnataka have emerged as leaders in EV adoption, largely due to supportive state policies and greater awareness among consumers.

Answer the following questions, based on the above passage :

(1) Justify the following statement: Despite governmental support, the initial cost of EVs remains a challenge for consumers.

[1 Marks]

(2) Electric vehicles offer multiple benefits in India. Support the above statement in 40 words with evidence from the text.

[2 Marks]

(3) “In 2023, India recorded sales of over 1.5 million EVs, a significant jump from previous years.” State any one inference that can be drawn from the above statement.

[1 Marks]

(4)

Complete the sentence suitably:

To address the challenge of charging infrastructure, various initiatives are being undertaken, such as _____.

[1 Marks]

(5)

Select the option that is true for the assertion and reason given below:

Assertion: EVs are gaining traction in India.

Reason: The Indian government is committed to reducing carbon emissions.

(A) Both the assertion and reason are true, and the reason is the correct explanation of the assertion.

(B) Both the assertion and reason are true, but the reason is not the correct explanation of the assertion.

(C) The assertion is true, but the reason is false.

(D) The assertion is false, but the reason is true.

[1 Marks]

(6)

Complete the following with one suitable reason from the text:

The silent operation of EVs contributes to better urban living because _____.

[1 Marks]

(7) According to the passage, what is 'range anxiety' in the context of electric vehicles?

[1 Marks]

(8) Give one reason to support why the adoption of EVs is slow in some parts of India.

[1 Marks]

(9) Based on the given text, which type of EV dominated sales in India in 2023?

[1 Marks]

Section C

Question 7.

A manager wrote a report to his seniors about his team. Fill in the blank with the correct option to complete the report:

By the end of this quarter, the assistant manager _____ on this campaign for eight months.

(A) will be working

(B) will have been working

(C) will have working

(D) would have been working

[1 Marks]

Question 8.

Read the given sentence from a sales report: Identify the error and supply the correction:

Being checked all the figures twice, she was sure there were no errors.

[1 Marks]

Error	*Correction*

Question 9.

Read the conversation between the store supervisor and the salesman :

Supervisor : “Did you switch off all the lights before leaving office yesterday ?”

Salesman – “Yes, I did and I also handed over the keys to the night supervisor.”

A store supervisor asked the salesman whether he had switched off all the lights before leaving the office the day before.

The salesman confirmed _____. Report the salesman’s response.

[1 Marks]

Question 10.

A school Principal addressed Board aspirants and said:

'_____ candidates must carry their identification proof.' Fill in the blank with the appropriate option:

(A) Each

(B) All

(C) Every

(D) One

[1 Marks]

Question 11.

Isha said to her parents, 'My mentor will always guide me, even after this programme ends.'

Report what Isha said to her parents.

[1 Marks]

Question 12.

Find the error in the sentence and supply the correction:

I was disappointed to see that in the library there was less books on the subject than expected.

[1 Marks]

Error	*Correction*

Question 13.

Fill in the blank with the correct option:

My friends _____ the movie tickets before we even reached the ticket counter.

(A) has collected

(B) had collected

(C) collect

(D) will collect

[1 Marks]

Question 14.

Select the correct option to complete the sentence from a recipe book:

After stirring the cocoa into the melted butter, you _____ add the eggs one at a time before adding the flour.

(A) would

(B) might

(C) may

(D) must

[1 Marks]

Question 15.

Report the following sentence by a customer:

'Did you double-check the address before dispatching the washing machine?'

[1 Marks]

Question 16.

Complete the following sentence by choosing the correct option:

If we had consulted the engineer, we _____ this mistake.

(A) would avoid

(B) will avoid

(C) would have avoided

(D) had avoided

[1 Marks]

Question 17.

Complete the following newspaper report by filling in the blank:

The number of road accidents _____ increased this year.

(A) have

(B) are

(C) has

(D) were

[1 Marks]

Question 18.

The speaker in conversation with a group of ministers said,

"I feel reassured after hearing your opinions."

What did the speaker say to the ministers?

[1 Marks]

Section D

Question 19. What lesson does the poet convey about nature in ‘How to Tell Wild Animals’?

[3 Marks]

Question 20.

How does the short structure of poem ‘Dust of Snow’ enhance its message about emotional renewal ? Support your answer briefly.

[3 Marks]

Question 21.

In ‘Mijbil the Otter’, how does the narrator’s patience contrast with the reactions of fellow passengers and local people ? What does this reveal about human understanding of the unfamiliar ?

[3 Marks]

Question 22.

In ‘Madam Rides the Bus’, how does the contrast between Valli’s boldness and her emotional response to the dead cow shape your view of her maturity ?

[3 Marks]

Question 23.

What was Chubukov’s reaction when he heard about Lomov’s proposal for his daughter’s hand ? (The Proposal)

[3 Marks]

Question 24.

Why does Griffin, despite his scientific genius, end up leading a destructive life ? (Footprints Without Feet)

[3 Marks]

Question 25.

Why does Horace Danby consider himself an honest man despite being a thief ? How does this self-perception affect his decision in the story ? (A Question of Trust)

[3 Marks]

Question 26.

In ‘A Triumph of Surgery’, how does Tricki’s condition reflect the consequences of pampering pets excessively ? What does this suggest about human attachment ?

[3 Marks]

Section E

Question 27.

The data given below shows how teenagers spend their daily screen time across different digital activities.

Analyse the data provided and write a paragraph analyzing how teenagers allocate their daily screen time. Focus on the activity that occupies the largest proportion of time and on other major and minor activities in descending order, and on the balance between entertainment and educational screen use. Conclude with an observation about the overall trend.

[5 Marks]

S. No.	Digital Activities	Percentage
1.	Social media	35
2.	Watching videos / streaming	30
3.	Gaming	20
4.	Online learning	10
5.	Others (browsing, reading news, etc.,)	5

Question 28.

Read the given details of a community library designed for your neighbourhood:

● A well lit and ventilated reading lounge;

● A digital section with computers, tablets and e-books;

● A dedicated children’s corner with picture books and storytelling sessions;

● A quiet study area with desk lamps and soundproof partitions for students;

● outdoor reading space under trees for senior citizens;

● book-sharing stands where people can donate and borrow books freely.

Analyse the details and write an analytical paragraph in about 120 words about the suitability of this library. Focus on factors such as accessibility, reading environment, suitability for different age groups,

and community engagement.

[5 Marks]

Section F

Question 29. You are Devi / Dev Arora, a concerned resident. You are deeply concerned at the overflowing garbage dumps in the city. Besides being eyesores, these dumps create environmental and health risks. They produce a foul odour and attract stray animals and other scavengers. Write a letter to the Municipal Commissioner drawing attention to the situation. Suggest the need to identify systemic flaws in the collection system due to insufficient collection vehicles and irregular cleaning of dumps.

[5 Marks]

Question 30. Living in multistoreyed complexes with limited open space for sporting activities, you feel that children today are forced to stay indoors. This is leading to increased screen addiction, lack of concentration, and unhealthy eating habits and lifestyles. Write a letter to the editor on the need to build community centers with indoor sporting facilities for children. Highlight the benefits of creating a comfortable and safe environment, and its usefulness for residents. You are Shrushti / Sharan.

[5 Marks]

Section G

Question 31. How does Lencho's faith in God, as shown in 'A Letter to God' contrast with the skepticism of Kisa Gotami in 'Sermon at Benares'? Support your answer with details from the two texts.

[6 Marks]

Question 32.

Analyse how Amanda in the poem 'Amanda' and the dragon in the poem 'The Tale of Custard the Dragon' yearn for acceptance and a life free from criticism.

[6 Marks]

Question 33.

In 'The Necklace', Madam Loisel spends years repaying a debt for a necklace that was never valuable. How does this irony expose the illusion of wealth and the consequences of chasing appearances ?

[6 Marks]

Question 34.

In ‘The Book That Saved the Earth’, how does the play use humour and irony to comment on both futuristic technology and human assumptions ? What message do you think the author conveys through the Martians’ misinterpretation of a nursery rhyme ?

[6 Marks]